

Endangered earth

SUMMER 2014



CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



Bear Essentials: Opening a New Chapter for Grizzly Recovery

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ON THE WEB



Endangered Species Ringtones: Hear the call of the wild? Or want to, whenever your cell phone rings? At the Center's RareEarthtones.org, you can download free ringtones of the songs, roars, chirps and howls of more than 100 imperiled animals — and wallpaper, too. (Check out LlamadasSalvajes.org for ringtones with descriptions in Spanish.)



Find Species Where You Are: Ever wonder which endangered animals or plants may be hiding near you? Visit BiologicalDiversity.org/SpeciesFinder to download our free “Species Finder” app for the Android phone, and find out in the blink of an eye.

Cover photo by Shane Lin
Photo on page 10 © Robin Silver

“...a renewed recovery effort could increase grizzly populations from about 1,800 today in the continental United States to around 6,000.”

That’s why in June the Center filed a landmark petition urging the Fish and Wildlife Service to greatly expand its grizzly bear recovery effort across the West. We identified more than 110,000 square miles of potential grizzly bear habitat in places like Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico that ought to be considered. Such a renewed recovery effort could increase grizzly populations from about 1,800 today in the continental United States to around 6,000.

There is little doubt that the grizzly bear would not have survived but for the protections provided by the Endangered Species Act in 1975. With protections, human garbage that attracted bears—leading them into conflicts with people and ultimately their death—was cleaned up, habitat was protected and restored, and killing bears was prohibited.

These actions have been particularly effective in Yellowstone and Glacier, where removal of protection is now being considered. But they have not been enough to recover bears in the other three places they survive—the North Cascades of Washington, the Selkirk Mountains of Idaho and the Cabinat Yaak of Idaho and Montana.

Nor have they been sufficient to recover bears to the many areas where they remain absent, but substantial habitat remains, including the Selway Bitterroot in Idaho and Montana, the Sierra Nevada in California, where the bear is on the state flag, but has been absent for nearly 100 years, the Grand Canyon and Gila Wilderness in the Southwest and Uinta Mountains in Utah, as well as a number of other areas.

Removing protections now will expose grizzly bears to increased levels of killing and state-sponsored sport hunts, all but ensuring that grizzly bears do not expand to additional areas. With one of the lowest reproductive rates of any mammal in North America, the grizzly bear cannot withstand more killing administered by states that have little tolerance for large carnivores.

Not only are bears not recovered across the vast majority of their historic range, but concerns remain about the long-term prospects of bears in Yellowstone and elsewhere. In recent years, Yellowstone bears have lost two key foods, Yellowstone cutthroat trout and whitebark pine seeds, as a result of nonnative species and climate change. This is forcing bears to eat more meat, which has heightened conflict with big game hunters and livestock operators.

Yellowstone bears also remain isolated from other populations, which is likely to lead to future problems with genetic loss. Rather than addressing this problem by recovering bears in nearby habitat and ensuring connectivity, however, the Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed the very artificial solution of trucking bears into Yellowstone.

That’s why we’re pushing the Service to recover grizzly bears, asking for a new plan that would return bears to the many areas that still retain enough wildness to ensure that populations new and old have the genetic connectivity to ensure long-term health. Over the past several decades, scientists have demonstrated that such a broad vision for recovery is possible. Moreover, more grizzlies in more places will ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to experience the thrills of encountering grizzly bears in the wild, minding their own business, as I did so many years ago.

The government should not walk away from the iconic grizzly bear until the job of recovery has been accomplished. The Center will keep you posted about the next steps in our campaign to recover the grizzly bear and keep the wild in our lives—and theirs.

To see our map of potential grizzly bear habitat in the West, visit: BIOLOGICALDIVERSITY.ORG/GRIZZLY_MAP



Louisa Willcox is the Center’s Northern Rockies representative. She has been an advocate and leader in the protection of wildlands and wildlife in the region for nearly 30 years, specializing in conservation of large carnivores such as grizzly bears and wolves.

Grizzly courtesy Alena Houšková / Wikipedia

The Wildlife Killing Agency

The Center Files a Historic Challenge Against Wildlife Services to Protect Wolves, Bears, Foxes and other Endangered Species

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's wildlife-killing arm, the misnamed "Wildlife Services," exterminates both wild and companion animals on a staggering scale, often in cruel and inhumane ways. The program claims it kills up to 3 million animals per year, but even this huge number doesn't accurately represent the slaughter — in which animals are poisoned and gunned down from aircraft, as well as being caught in brutal traps that are left unchecked for days, weeks, and even months at a time.

Most of the program's activities are carried out on behalf of agribusiness interests. One of its standard operating procedures is "predator control": the widespread, indiscriminate killing of coyotes, mountain lions, wolves, and other animals near the top of the food chain on behalf of livestock operators and other private interests in the American West. In that sense the extermination program is nothing more or less than another subsidy, at taxpayers' expense, for cattle grazing on our public lands. Cows trample vital areas, vegetation, springs and streams,

and ecosystems, and often drive rare native species toward extinction.

Wildlife Services thus kicks wild animals when they're down, harshly limiting the recovery of many of the same protected species it played a primary role in eliminating from the landscape over the past century.

The program's methods are

notoriously indiscriminate, hurting a vast number of nontarget animals, including endangered species. In January 2013, for instance, a Wildlife Services employee shot and killed a Mexican wolf in New Mexico — the 25th death caused by Wildlife Service agents since the critically endangered species was reintroduced to public lands in 1996. Following a public outcry and investigation, the program excused that killing by claiming that the employee had mistaken the wolf for a coyote (though he was required, as a professional, to know the difference).

Wildlife Services refuses to fire or even discipline trappers who carry out acts of shocking animal cruelty. Instead it goes to great lengths to mollify the public and members of Congress with investigations, and in the end stands by employees who violate the terms of their employment, standards of professional conduct, and even the law.

Well, at the Center we're not taking it lying down. Wildlife Services is an ethical outrage that violates the principles of American democracy. In December we submitted a comprehensive petition to the Department of Agriculture demanding reforms through a public process and a framework of rules to govern the agency and steer it toward activities that restore ecosystems and landscapes, with binding ethical standards to stop its vicious treatment of animals. Earlier this year the Agriculture Department acknowledged the petition; it's now considering our request. Meanwhile, media outlets like *The Washington Post* have picked up the story and are adding to the pressure for reform.

On behalf of our members, we will continue to push for reform with administrative as well as legislative measures. We're also watching the program's activities on the ground, evaluating opportunities to successfully challenge it in court. We fully intend to hold Wildlife Services accountable and force it toward top-to-bottom reform.

Watch our video and take action at:
BIOLOGICALDIVERSITY.ORG/WILDLIFE_SERVICES_VIDEO



Amy Atwood is the Center's endangered species legal director. She manages and carries out litigation for the Center's Endangered Species program from Portland, Ore.

Fox courtesy of dbfphotos / Flickr Commons

Saving Endangered Species One Meal at a Time

New Campaign Highlights Effects of Meat Consumption on Wildlife

Study after study has crunched the numbers and come to the same conclusion: One of the best ways to take a bite out of climate change is by cutting back on meat consumption. This is tough news for some to swallow — meat is a central part of American culture and cuisine, as well as an economic mainstay. But it doesn't have to be. Changing our diets is a critical part not only of addressing the climate crisis, but also of stopping the cascade of wildlife extinctions. That's why, this spring, we launched our new Earth-friendly Diet Campaign, asking people to take extinction off their plates by eating less meat.

It's not just polar bears and other climate-sensitive species that are at risk from our country's ravenous appetite for animal protein. Some of the other costs to wildlife from meat consumption include:

- Throughout the western states, ranching interests are behind the shooting, trapping and poisoning of millions of animals a year by the federal Wildlife Services program, including wolves and bears.
- Ranchers drove Mexican gray wolves extinct in their ecosystems and continue to be leading opponents of recovery efforts.
- Grazing on public lands puts more than 175 threatened or endangered species in harm's way, including sage grouses, black-footed ferrets and bighorn sheep.
- Across the country, endangered species like the Ozark hellbender are threatened by water-quality degradation from meat production — 35,000 miles of U.S. rivers have been polluted by livestock waste.

Wolf courtesy lwpkommunikacio / Flickr Commons



The new campaign is an expansion of our Population and Sustainability program. We know it isn't just about the sheer number of people on our planet that matters, but how we act and what we consume. Meat and energy consumption are key drivers of some of our most vexing environmental problems.

Although the meat campaign's only a few months old, it's been gratifying to see the response. NPR, Salon and more than a dozen other news outlets and blogs have covered the campaign. In its first few weeks, thousands of people took the pledge to reduce the amount of meat in their diets by one-third or more. If everyone sticks with it, by next spring we will collectively have saved billions of gallons of water, thousands of acres of land, and the greenhouse gas equivalent of taking 4,400 cars off the road for a year.

All those savings add up to more habitat and security for wildlife — and countless health benefits for the planet and for people. And we're just getting started. In the coming months, we'll be expanding our Earth-friendly Diet Campaign with more resources, information and ways to take action.

You have at least three chances a day, every day, to save wildlife. Choose to take extinction off your plate.

Learn more about the campaign and take the pledge at
WWW.TAKEEXTINCTIONOFFYOURPLATE.COM.

Stephanie Feldstein is the Center's Population and Sustainability director and leads our work to highlight and address threats to endangered species and wild places from runaway human population growth and overconsumption. She is located in Michigan.



Extreme Energy

Keystone XL Pipeline

2014 has been a big year for the campaign against Keystone XL. In January a long-awaited “environmental impact statement” was released by the feds, unleashing a wave of activism. Within 72 hours the Center and our allies catalyzed 283 protest vigils in 49 states. More than 10,000 people demanded the president reject Keystone. Two days later, as the public comment period began, I registered my own “public comment” by getting arrested with 27 others in an act of peaceful civil disobedience at the federal building in San Francisco.

Over the next month, the Center joined a mass outreach campaign that generated a record-breaking 2 million public comments opposing Keystone. We helped organize rallies at high-profile events with President Obama, including fundraisers in Miami, Chicago and Los Angeles; we even released a “Polar Bear vs. Keystone XL” rap video starring Frostpaw the Polar Bear. We engaged in intensive recruitment for the “Reject and

Protect” mass rally in D.C. to stand in solidarity with farmers, ranchers and tribes along the proposed pipeline route.

In April the next big news hit: The State Department announced its decision on the pipeline would be delayed, likely till after the 2014 elections. We’d staved off the pipeline once more. But we won’t let up till it’s rejected once and for all.



Valerie Love is the Center’s No Tar Sands campaigner in San Francisco. She works to mobilize action against tar sands development and the Keystone XL pipeline.

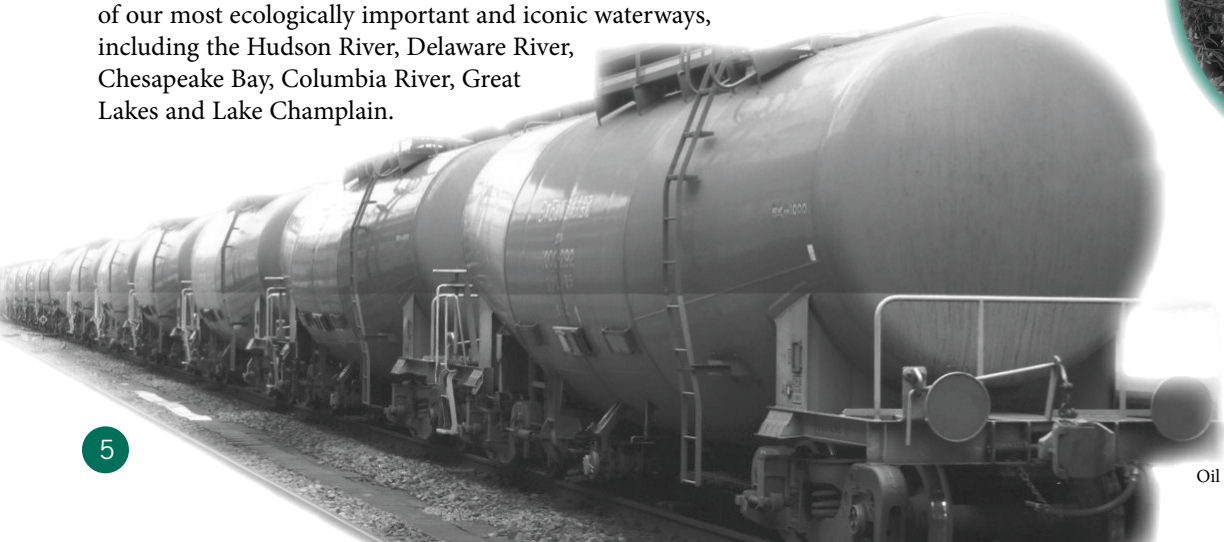
Bomb Trains

Since 2008 the amount of crude oil transported by rail in North America has increased by more than 4,000 percent. With this enormous escalation there has been a rise in accidents and oil spills: Trains spilled more oil in 2013 than in the past 40 years combined. The unexpected volatility of “Bakken” crude, originating in North Dakota and neighboring regions, has led to explosive derailments, including a train wreck last summer in Quebec that killed 47 people and incinerated part of a town.

Public safety is the leading concern for the hundreds of cities and towns strung along rail lines. But crude-by-rail transport, and the associated barging of oil from rail terminals to coastal refineries, is also threatening the health of some of our most ecologically important and iconic waterways, including the Hudson River, Delaware River, Chesapeake Bay, Columbia River, Great Lakes and Lake Champlain.

This past January the Center called for a moratorium on crude shipments by train in the Northeast. In February we filed a notice of intent to sue the federal government for its failure to update oil-spill response plans for the Hudson; and we’re also opposing the dramatic increase in oil-train traffic along the Columbia River.

Mollie Matteson is a senior scientist with the Center. She works from Vermont.



Oil train courtesy Lover of Romance / Wikimedia

Fracking Fight in California Heats Up, Pressures Gov. Brown for Moratorium

Pressure Mounts Amid News of Earthquake Risks, Offshore Dumping

The more Californians learn about hydraulic fracturing, the more they dislike it. The past few months have raised new questions about fracking’s threats to the Golden State, from growing concerns about offshore fracking in Southern California to new science linking the dangerous oil and gas extraction method to earthquakes.

The Center uncovered shocking documents earlier this year showing that oil platforms near Santa Barbara have federal permission to dump fracking chemicals mixed with wastewater directly into California’s ocean. Many offshore fracking chemicals pose cancer risks or ecological hazards.

But the oil industry, which has fracked hundreds of offshore wells in California, is allowed to dump more than 9 billion gallons of contaminated wastewater a year into the waters of the wildlife-rich Santa Barbara Channel, home to blue whales and other endangered animals.

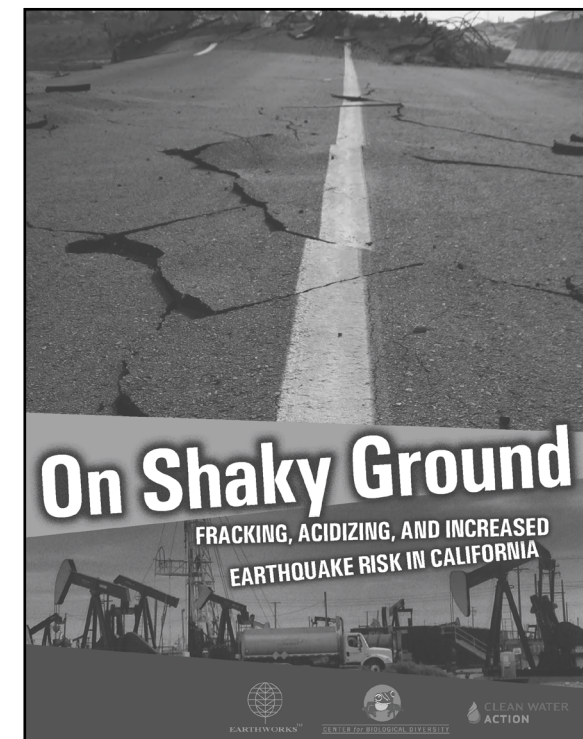
In February the Center’s Oceans program filed a legal petition urging the Environmental Protection Agency to halt this disturbing discharge. We’re also pushing the California Coastal Commission to halt fracking in state waters to protect wildlife and coastal communities.

In March we teamed up with other environmental groups to release a report showing that millions of Californians live in areas threatened by earthquakes caused by fracking and other oil-industry activities. *On Shaky Ground: Fracking, Acidizing, and Increased Earthquake Risk in California* found that oil companies are driving up California’s earthquake danger by injecting billions of gallons of wastewater a year into hundreds of disposal wells near active faults around Los Angeles, Bakersfield and other major cities.

The report, available at ShakyGround.org, also found that a fracking expansion could produce up to 9 trillion gallons of wastewater — much of which would be injected into oil industry disposal wells.

Such wastewater injection triggered a magnitude 5.7 earthquake near Oklahoma City that destroyed more than a dozen homes. And new research links fracking itself to dangerous quakes.

These risks generated significant support for Senate Bill 1132, a bill in the California legislature to halt fracking while its risks are studied. But in the absence of quick state action on this public health threat, local governments from Los Angeles to Butte County have moved forward on local fracking bans and moratoriums.



In March the Center joined allies to release a scientific report on the link between fracking and earthquakes.

Growing concerns about threats to California’s air, water, and the fight against climate change are also putting enormous pressure on Gov. Jerry Brown. As the risks grow clearer, it’s hard to see how Gov. Brown can maintain his support for a fracking expansion that could cause irreparable damage to the state he leads.

For more about the Center’s California fracking campaign, go to: BIOLOGICALDIVERSITY.ORG/CALIFORNIAFRACKING

Kassie Siegel is senior counsel and director of the Center’s Climate Law Institute in San Francisco.



California Protects Wolves the Same Day Pups Are Confirmed for West Coast's Famous Wanderer OR-7

Meanwhile, Fight to Halt Wolf-killing Campaign in Idaho Continues

June unleashed an amazing turn of events in the Center's work to protect and promote wolves throughout the West Coast.

On June 4 the California Fish and Game Commission, responding to our petition, protected the animals under the state's Endangered Species Act.

The decision came just hours after it was confirmed that OR-7, the famous wolf that wandered into California in late 2011 and has returned periodically ever since, had sired pups in southern Oregon. It marked the first time wild wolves had successfully bred in the Oregon Cascades since the 1940s.

The sudden convergence of events sent a spark through all of us who have been working for years to return wolves to California, Oregon and Washington.

While populations have grown in Oregon and Washington in recent years, California, where wolves had been driven to extinction by the mid-1920s, had none. OR-7 changed that.

When this lone male wolf arrived, he set off a media frenzy and kick-started discussions about wolf recovery in the Golden State. Within weeks the Center had filed a petition to protect California's wolves under the state's Endangered Species Act.

The commission's June decision to protect California wolves begins a new chapter in the history of wolf recovery in America; it ensures that California, where there's an abundance of wolf habitat, will provide a safe haven for wolf families like the one OR-7 just started.

This victory couldn't have happened without all of our activists who wrote letters, made phone calls, attended rallies and donated to our Predator Defense Fund. I hope you'll share in this celebration and write to the California Fish and Game Commission to thank them for making the right call rather than simply rubber-stamping the state wildlife agency's recommendation not to protect the wolves. (Write to fgc@fgc.ca.gov.)

Meanwhile, in Idaho, the fight goes on.

Since 2011, when federal endangered species protections were removed for wolves in the northern Rockies, Idaho's management of wolves has grown more and more aggressive and brutal.

In January the Idaho Department of Fish and Wildlife sent a bounty hunter into the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness to slaughter two entire wolf packs. In February the agency sent helicopter snipers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's infamous Wildlife Services program into the Clearwater National Forest, where they gunned down 23 wolves from the air. And in April Gov. Butch Otter signed into law a bill the Idaho legislature had passed that establishes a wolf control board — a board whose sole purpose is to issue execution orders, with kill operations paid for by \$400,000 from the general fund.

The Center and our allies filed a legal challenge to stop the bounty hunter, resulting in the state pulling him out of the wilderness before the job was done in an effort to moot our litigation. (Even so, the lawsuit is proceeding to try to ensure that Idaho can't send killers into the Frank Church in the future.) Next Center supporters in Idaho showed up in crowds to protest Idaho's cruel anti-wolf policies at public hearings held by the agency and commission. Finally, we've put the state on notice that we believe these recent actions violate the agreements it made with the federal government when Idaho was granted wolf-management authority.

With our partners we're preparing to file a petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requesting that it extend its wolf-monitoring period by five years to ensure Idaho does not once again drive wolves to the brink of extinction.

Amaroq Weiss is the West Coast Wolf Organizer at the Center and coordinates campaigns for the restoration and protection of wolf populations in California, Oregon and Washington from Petaluma, Calif.



Wolf courtesy Gunnar Ries Amphibol/ Wikimedia

Key Win in Fight Over California Water Supplies

And Victory Over a Dangerous Powerline Proposal in L.A.

The Center's Urban Wildlands program scored victories this spring in two longstanding and complicated campaigns over major public projects with potentially far-reaching impacts on California wildlife and habitat.

First, a Sacramento superior court judge ruled in our favor in our challenge to the privatization of the vastly important Kern Water Bank. The court agreed that the environmental review for the transfer and operation of the water bank didn't pass legal muster, leaving open the possibility that the water bank will be shut down in the short term and bringing us one step closer to our goal of having this key link in California's water supply chain restored to public control.

Here's the backstory: In the late 1990s, agribusiness interests in the southern San Joaquin Valley seized control of the Kern Water Bank — at that point a massive underground reservoir being developed by the state to supplement water supplies during seasonal and yearly droughts. But Big Ag had recognized the bank's potential as a linchpin for its market-based scheme to privatize California's freshwater infrastructure. Industry stakeholders talked compliant state regulators into handing over the valuable asset for nothing.

The Kern Water Bank has since proven its worth to the privateers, greasing a bubble economy in high-value but unsustainable (and extremely thirsty) tree crops like pistachios and almonds. Meanwhile the fragile Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta has continued its precipitous decline, and dozens of aquatic species, from salmon to Delta smelt to Sacramento splittail, are collapsing toward extinction.

Our court win was the first step in unwinding this speculative privatization scheme and getting the Kern Water Bank back into public control — where it can be operated for the public, not private, good.

Our second victory this spring was over the proposed high-voltage "Presidential" power line project just north of Los Angeles. Working with tireless local allies, we succeeded

...the fragile Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta has continued its precipitous decline, and dozens of aquatic species, from salmon to Delta smelt to Sacramento splittail, are collapsing toward extinction.

in persuading state regulators to reject a wasteful and harmful proposal by Southern California Edison to build a new power line system.

The proposed line would have laid waste to huge swaths of designated critical habitat for California gnatcatchers, Riverside fairy shrimp and yellow-flowering Lyon's pentachaeta; it would have broken up an important regional wildlife linkage. We pushed for less-harmful alternatives like improved substations and demonstrated how advances in renewable energy and changed usage patterns had made the project obsolete before it was even built.

Adam Keats directs the Center's Urban Wildlands program, which works to halt urban sprawl and destructive land development in important wildlife habitat. He works in San Francisco.



Delta smelt courtesy Bull Moose Peterson / USFWS



Photo by Eric Kilby / Flickr Commons, BY-SA

Welcome Home, American Jaguar

In response to a lawsuit from the Center for Biological Diversity, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finalized protection for 764,207 acres, or 1,194 square miles, of habitat for endangered jaguars in southern Arizona and New Mexico this March. The historic “critical habitat” designation to help the great cats recover comes five years after a federal court rejected the Service’s argument that jaguars are too rare in the United States to merit habitat protection, and almost 17 years after the Service first protected jaguars under the Endangered Species Act in response to another court case brought by the Center.

“Welcome home, American jaguar,” said the Center’s Michael Robinson upon news of the victory. “I’m hopeful that decades from now we’ll look back on this historic decision and see it as the first on-the-ground action that eventually led to the return of a thriving population of these beautiful big cats to this country.”

The critical habitat designation

prohibits federal agencies from destroying or “adversely modifying” the habitat, such as by granting permits for mining or other commercial activities that would render the habitat unsuitable for jaguars. There is currently a jaguar living on U.S. Forest Service land in the Santa Rita Mountains outside Tucson in the footprint of the proposed Rosemont Copper Mine. The latest designation will make it illegal for the Forest Service or the Fish and Wildlife Service to fund or authorize activities that would harm jaguar habitat.

The critical habitat designation consists of six units, each containing one or more mountain ranges in which jaguars have been recorded in recent years or through which they are thought to have traveled. The designation includes the Baboquivari, Pajarito, Atascosa, Tumacacori, Patagonia, Santa Rita and Huachuca mountain ranges in Arizona; the Peloncillo Mountains that straddle the Arizona/New Mexico border; and the northern tip of the San Luis Mountains in New Mexico’s “bootheel” region.

BiologicalDiversity.org/jaguar.

More Habitat in Sight for Puget Sound Orcas

Killer whales are one of the Pacific Northwest’s most iconic animals. In response to a petition from the Center, the National Marine Fisheries Service announced in April that it will consider expanding protected critical habitat for the endangered “Southern Resident” population of killer whales. If finalized the new rule would extend Endangered Species Act protection to the whales’ winter foraging range off the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California.

Despite nearly a decade of federal protection, the Puget Sound’s orca population remains perilously small, hovering around only 80 animals. The proposal is an important step toward recovery and will help the whales stave off extinction.

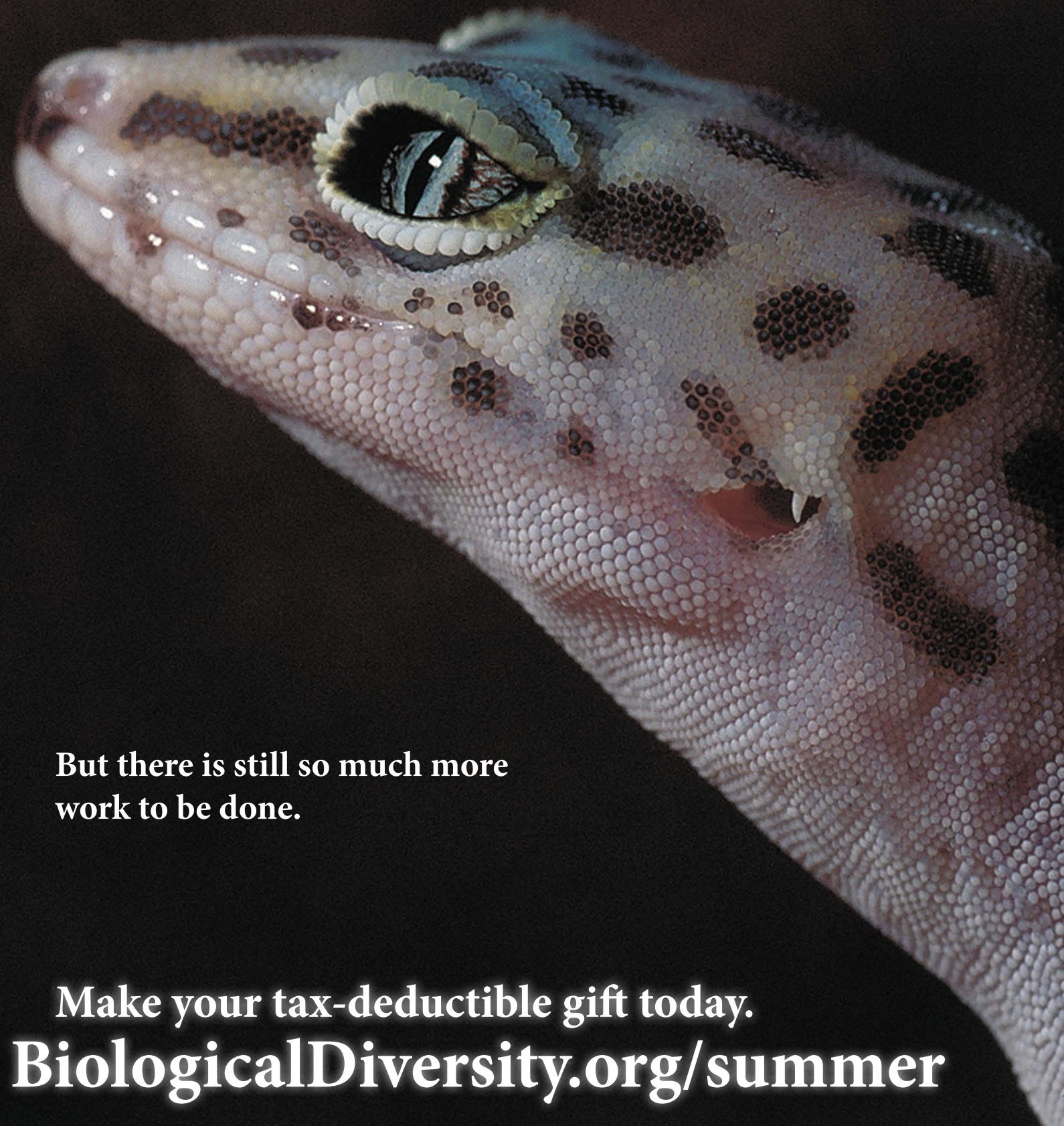
The Fisheries Service listed Southern Residents as endangered in 2005, following a legal petition from the Center and allies. Although the agency has already protected portions of the population’s summer habitat in Puget Sound, important offshore areas were identified only recently.

New research, including satellite tracking data, demonstrates that the orcas travel extensively along the West Coast during the winter and early spring, regularly congregating near coastal rivers to feed on migrating salmon. Human activities in coastal waters threaten these whales by reducing salmon numbers, generating toxic pollution and increasing ocean noise, which disrupts the orcas’ ability to communicate and locate prey.

The proposal will be open to public comment and the Fisheries Service will conduct additional scientific and economic studies of the expansion’s impact. The agency is required to determine whether the proposed expansion is warranted by Jan. 16, 2015.

BiologicalDiversity.org/orca.

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Beyond Imagination

From the Director

Kierán Suckling

Few animals capture the human imagination quite like grizzly bears. Brawny, cagey and highly omnivorous, they move across the landscape like they own it. And for thousands of years, they pretty much did.

There were once some 50,000 grizzly bears in the continental United States. Members of the Lewis and Clark expedition famously ran into one on May 5, 1805, describing “a very large and a turrible looking animal, which we found very hard to kill...”

That expedition, as every good schoolchild knows, helped open the floodgates to the West, ultimately leading to the mass slaughter of large carnivores, including grizzlies. Today the lumbering creatures survive in less than 4 percent of this historic habitat in just a few isolated populations, namely around Yellowstone and Glacier national parks.

That’s not enough. If we’re going to recover grizzly bears under the Endangered Species Act, it’s time to take a new tack. The Center just filed a legal petition with the government to vastly expand grizzly recovery and consider returning the great

bears to vast portions of the American West, including parts of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

We’ve identified more than 100,000 square miles of potential grizzly habitat. Returning grizzlies to these areas could boost the lower 48 population from around 1,800 today to roughly 6,000.

These bears are vital cogs in the ecosystems where they survived for thousands of years. And by protecting them, we’ll protect huge areas of land that other wild animals rely on too.

Our work to help grizzly bears is part of our larger effort to save the continent’s top predators, including wolves, jaguars, wolverines and Florida panthers. These beasts, so culturally powerful they became the stuff of fairy tales, have had a complicated and sometimes fraught relationship with people that too often has ended with our attempts to exterminate them. We know better now. These magnificent beasts aren’t meant to wink out and become only the stuff of legend.

They belong here with us, in this world.

Endangered earth

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